

~~SECRET~~

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

23 March 1984

Soviet Interest in Arms Control Negotiations in 1984

Summary

The Soviets appear to have adopted a two-pronged strategy on arms control, taking an inflexible line on INF and START, while simultaneously expressing willingness to move ahead on other security issues, and signaling that a breakthrough in US-Soviet relations is possible if Washington shows flexibility in these other areas. They presumably calculate that this strategy enables them to stand firm on the central issues of INF and START, without making themselves appear so intransigent as to rally support for NATO's policies or to demonstrate that they, not the Administration, are responsible for poor US-Soviet relations. Meanwhile, they continue to probe for US flexibility on a range of issues, with the aim of extracting the maximum price for any marked improvement in relations or arms control issues before the US elections. The Politburo will be wary of any major steps unless convinced that significant gains are at hand for the USSR, especially on their fundamental concerns in START and INF.

25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of Soviet Analysis, with contributions from other SUVA analysts. Questions and comments should be addressed to the Chief, Current [redacted]

25X1
25X1

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

The Soviet Calculus

1. Two major considerations appear to be behind current Soviet policies on arms control and US-Soviet relations; the need to keep the deadlocked INF and START issues from seriously damaging the Soviet political position in Europe--including the effort to fan anti-INF sentiment--and calculations regarding the US election campaign. [REDACTED]

25X1

2. The Soviets appear interested in a dialogue with the US that would end the spiraling deterioration in relations. Nonetheless, they have made it clear they are reluctant to do anything that would enhance the reelection prospects of the present Administration by enabling it to claim a major success in the area of US-Soviet relations. At the same time, they apparently believe that if they appear unyielding, the Administration will be able to lay the blame for poor relations on their doorstep and claim that its own attempts at a bilateral improvement have been rebuffed. Moreover, they appear not to have excluded the possibility of some kind of agreement at this time if convinced it would serve their interests. [REDACTED]

25X1

3. The Soviets appear deeply pessimistic about the prospects for a significant US concession on START and INF, and probably are sensitive to the possibility that by suspending arms control talks and taking military countermeasures, they have made West Europeans less receptive to arguments that the breakdown in the East-West dialogue is due exclusively to US intransigence and belligerence. Moscow nevertheless may continue to hope that domestic pressures in the US, including electoral politics, and increased concern and pressure from Western Europe over the US-Soviet stalemate could prompt the US to alter its current stance to a position more acceptable to Moscow. [REDACTED]

25X1

4. The Soviets already are trying to heighten these pressures through direct appeals to West European leaders, with whom Moscow has maintained close contact despite earlier warnings about the consequences of the first deployments. In private [REDACTED] as public commentary, they have sought to demonstrate popular opposition to INF, claimed that the US has spurned Soviet efforts to restore the East-West dialogue, and warned that deployment of US missiles subverts the sovereignty of West European countries as well as their "gains" from detente. Moscow might further try to court West European opinion by hinting at willingness to consider multilateral negotiations that would draw the British and French into direct discussion of INF and their own forces' role. It appears more likely at present, however, that the Soviets will try to gain credit by expanding upon their initiatives on non-INF issues in existing multilateral forums such as MBFR, the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, or the CDE. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

5. The Soviets also will continue trying to cast the US in the villain's role by encouraging opposition leaders in the INF-

SECRET [REDACTED]

basing countries--particularly the Social Democrats in West Germany--to speak out forcefully against INF deployments. Further, Moscow has maintained and perhaps even raised the level of its direct and covert support to the West European peace movement. The Soviets may hope that the existence of deployed missiles--along with announced basing sites--will provide a focus for renewed demonstrations by the dispirited and divided movement. Moscow's efforts in this area probably will be tempered, however, by the concern to avoid the charge of manipulating the peace movement. In addition, it now must face the possibility that elements of the movement could direct their opposition activities against Warsaw Pact countermeasures. Moreover, Soviet exit from the negotiations makes it difficult for them to recapture the high ground in the contest for public opinion. [REDACTED]

25X1

Intransigence on Resuming START and INF Talks

6. Following Chernenko's accession, a brief hiatus in the repetition of Moscow's demand that the INF missiles be withdrawn had suggested that the Soviets might be hinting at greater flexibility on resuming talks. There now have been several recent indications that Moscow has decided to maintain its firm line against resuming the Geneva negotiations. In a number of public statements, Soviet leaders have said they will not return to the Geneva talks unless the new US missiles are removed from Europe. In talks on 10-12 March with senior US arms control specialists in Moscow under the auspices of the Dartmouth Conference, as well as in Chernenko's talks on 13 March with visiting leaders of the West German Social Democratic Party, the Soviets also rejected the idea of merging the negotiations, some implying and others asserting outright that neither negotiation could resume unless NATO's new intermediate-range missiles were withdrawn from Western Europe. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

8. Some Soviets have hinted that INF talks could resume this year if the US agreed to a moratorium in the INF deployment schedule and taking the UK and French systems into account somewhere in the arms control negotiations. The most recent statement to this effect was made in mid-March by a representative of the Institute for the USA and Canada at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, who said that INF talks could be resumed in 1984 if the US met these two conditions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

9. Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin has taken a more upbeat stance on the prospects for strategic arms negotiations in discussions with correspondents than the general line would indicate. His statements clearly have been intended to portray the USSR, despite its tough public stance, as sincerely interested in movement, and thereby to put pressure on the Administration for greater flexibility. His remarks also probably reflect instructions to keep open a channel through which Moscow's hoped-for movement from the US side might be conveyed.

25X1

10. The Soviets almost certainly realize that they eventually must moderate their position if they are to limit NATO INF deployments and US strategic systems through resumed INF and START negotiations. However, while the Soviets hope to use negotiations to limit US strategic programs, their R & D programs provide them with the capability to compete with or without arms control agreements. Strategic offensive systems currently in development and flight-testing provide the Soviets with the basis for improving their strategic capabilities under SALT II Treaty limits or those of their START proposals, as well as in the absence of any arms control constraints. There is room under SALT II and the Soviet START position for their new MIRVed SLBM systems (the SS-N-20 and SS-NX-23), the ALCM-equipped Bear H and Blackjack heavy bombers, and the MIRVed SS-X-24 ICBM. Further, the claim by the Soviets that their single-RV SS-X-25 is a "modernized" SS-13 is intended to permit deployment of this system as well. While the Soviets at START have thus far insisted that long-range SLCMS and GLCMS be banned, they are testing such systems and are well-positioned to deploy them in the absence of a ban on them.

25X1

11. The Soviets have proposed talks for an agreement that would eliminate existing anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons and ban testing and deployment of all space-based weapons. In addition, they have announced a moratorium on testing ASAT weapons in space, as long as the US refrains from such tests. Their immediate aim probably is to preclude the development and deployment of the US direct-ascent ASAT interceptor, while their longer term aim is to prevent the US from translating its technological capabilities into systems such as space-based lasers that could be used both for ASAT weapons and for ballistic missile defense.

25X1

Prospects for Progress on Other Issues

12. Chernenko seemed to imply in his speech of 2 March that an agreement on issues usually regarded as secondary--particularly the banning of chemical weapons and the demilitarization of space--could prepare the way for a "dramatic breakthrough" in US-Soviet relations despite the impasse in START

25X1

and INF. The suggestion that it might be possible to bypass the most intractable issues and achieve progress elsewhere appears intended to improve the Soviet image as a proponent of arms control and reduced international tensions despite the USSR's continued refusal to return to Geneva. At the same time, the Soviets are probing for flexibility on a range of issues where progress would not necessarily require a reversal of fundamental US or Soviet positions. [REDACTED]

25X1

13. The proposals Chernenko listed represent longstanding Soviet goals and public positions:

- US ratification of the treaties limiting underground nuclear weapons tests and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes;
- resumption of negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty, suspended by the US;
- an agreement to limit weapons in outer space;
- US acceptance of a freeze on nuclear weapons; and
- an agreement to ban chemical weapons, where he said conditions for an accord are "beginning to ripen."

He hinted that the Soviets, who recently accepted the principle of continuous international monitoring of chemical weapons destruction sites, may be willing to make further moves on chemical weapons verification. He said that they favor an agreement under which there would be effective control of the "whole process of destruction--from beginning to end." Reliable sources have told the US delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that the Soviets are preparing to table a draft treaty to ban chemical weapons. [REDACTED]

25X1

14. Soviet officials, particularly the Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Vladimir Shustov, have indicated that the USSR attaches high priority to initiating "unofficial" talks with the US on limiting the deployment of weapons in outer space. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1

25X1

15. Chernenko's claim that a US-Soviet agreement on these issues could signal the start of a sharp improvement in bilateral relations suggests the Soviets might consider such an agreement as partial grounds for a meeting at the highest level. Soviet leaders have made a point of insisting, however, that it is up to

the US to act first. Moreover, Moscow may well hold out for a firm US commitment to at least negotiate on fundamental Soviet concerns in START and INF before agreeing to any dramatic bilateral gesture. The Soviets will be looking in particular for signals that the US is willing to consider major steps in accordance with Soviet objectives, such as:

- a freeze on further INF deployments, particularly Pershing IIs;
- an agreement to take into account UK and French systems; or
- an agreement to limit future deployment of US strategic systems the Soviets consider most threatening--SLCMs, ALCMs, MX, or the D-5 SLBM.

The Soviets have been ambiguous on the extent to which they hold progress in START dependent upon US concessions in INF. For now, it appears that they would refuse to resume the strategic negotiations unless satisfied that their central INF concerns would be addressed, but this line is doubtless intended in part to probe US willingness to make such concessions, and a definitive Soviet position is likely to emerge only in response to specific US initiatives. [REDACTED]

25X1

16. Chernenko also suggested that progress could be made toward agreement on "norms" to govern relations between nuclear powers, particularly an agreement to hold urgent consultations in the event of a situation threatening nuclear war. This area would appear to include current US-Soviet negotiations to upgrade crisis communications and talks aimed at preventing a recurrence of the KAL shootdown. Chernenko, however, raised this possibility separately from those issues which he suggested could lead to a "breakthrough" in relations, perhaps to signal that agreement on this point would not be of comparable significance. [REDACTED]

25X1

17. Chernenko made no reference on 2 March to the MBFR talks, and the Soviets appear to hold little expectation of an early breakthrough. A deputy director of the Institute for the USA and Canada said in late February that the Soviets would not have agreed to resume the talks had they been bilateral, a remark that suggests Moscow believes the principal advantage of the talks lies in the possibilities they offer for wedge-driving between the US and its allies. This view probably has been strengthened by Western press reports of differences between the US and West Germany over the Allied position. Even if the Western allies were to agree on softening their position regarding prior agreement on data, the Soviets would be unlikely to accept Western proposals on verification to the extent necessary for an early breakthrough in the talks. [REDACTED]

25X1

18. Since the beginning of the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe, Soviet spokesmen have been stressing the importance of an agreement on the non-use of force as a step toward improving the climate of East-West relations. Chernenko, however, did not refer to this proposal, and although the Soviets appear to attach greater importance than the US to declaratory measures, it is doubtful that a moderation of US opposition on this point alone would evoke any response from them on more substantive issues. [REDACTED]

25X1

19. Soviet spokesmen have also listed a number of other issues where they claim that agreement by the West would lead to a significant lowering of international tensions. These include a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, a nonaggression treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, an agreement to reduce military spending, and the establishment of nuclear-free zones, including northern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Indian Ocean. The Soviets doubtless realize that these proposals, where they are not purely cosmetic, would require major strategic concessions by the West, and the proposals therefore appear largely rhetorical, rather than serious attempts to find common ground. By dint of repetition, however, they may have acquired some real significance in Soviet eyes, and it is possible that US willingness to consider the more innocuous among them could be part of a package to improve bilateral relations. [REDACTED]

25X1

Uncertainties and Soviet Political Dynamics

20. While the ultimate authority for approving arms control policy rests with the Politburo, the formulation of key decisions in this area takes place in the Defense Council, a group of about half a dozen political and military leaders. Functioning as the Defense Council's executive secretariat, the General Staff--through its Main Operations Directorate--coordinates the flow of information to the Defense Council decisionmakers. This arrangement assures the military a highly influential role in the arms control policy-making process. Information and policy proposals are channeled through the General Staff from the Defense Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, the Military Industrial Commission, and specific Central Committee staffs, notably the International Department and International Information Department. Individuals from the Academy of Sciences and probably the personal secretariats of Politburo members can also inform Soviet leaders on arms control issues, but do not have access to the details of military plans and programs. [REDACTED]

25X1

21. Of those highly visible Soviet spokesmen on arms control issues, three have inter-agency access to official arms control policy information. They are Chief of the General Staff Nikolay Ogarkov, his first deputy, Sergey Akhromeyev, and Nikolay Chervov, chief of the Main Operation Directorate's Treaty Negotiating Directorate. Vadim Zagladin of the International Department and Leonid Zamyatin of the International Information

Department are believed to have some limited inter-agency access, as do high-level officials of the Foreign Ministry. Public figures of prominence such as Aleksandr Bovin, an Izvestiya commentator, and Georgiy Arbatov, Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada, probably have little information on the specifics of the formulation of arms control beyond that gleaned through personal connections with other members of the political elite and from instructions on the party line. [REDACTED]

25X1

22. Evidence of current power relationships and individual views on arms control within the Politburo is admittedly sparse. We believe, however, that the strategy toward relations with the US suggested in Chernenko's speech reflects a Politburo decision that was made before Andropov's death. [REDACTED]

25X1

23. We do not know the full range of differences within the Politburo on US-Soviet relations. The extent to which Chernenko and his colleagues will stand fast in their demand for significant changes in US positions, especially before the US elections, is unclear. They appear to be concerned, however, that any show of compromise in Moscow prior to some US move would be interpreted as a Soviet retreat in the face of a stiffening American defense posture. [REDACTED]

25X1

24. The evidence at least suggests therefore that the Soviet leadership in the coming months is unlikely to approve any measures that imply a major breakthrough in relations unless they are convinced that some US concessions will be forthcoming on significant arms control issues. [REDACTED]

25X1